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JCS

INFORMATION PAPER

Subject: Military Options for Reopening Sarajevo Airport (U)

1. (U) Purpose. To provide options to reopen Sarajevo airport for the delivery of humanitarian aid.
2. (U) Background. Sarajevo air operations have been periodically interrupted by the Bosnian Serbs since the beginning of the conflict. Bosnian Serb forces control the area surrounding the airport and the major land routes into Sarajevo. The Bosnian Serbs have the capability to attack aircraft in flight and while unloading on the airfield. Aircraft are threatened by both antiaircraft weapons and conventional direct and indirect ground systems. The Bosnian Muslims also have the capability, though to a lesser extent, to interdict air operations. ~~UNPROFOR has documented numerous occasions of such fire.~~ (and not under UNPROFOR control)

3. ~~(S)~~ Discussion. The following options are available for consideration for the delivery of humanitarian aid into Sarajevo:

Assumptions:

- New UNSCR(s) required to implement a military option will be adopted by the Security Council.
- A parallel diplomatic effort to secure the opening of Sarajevo will be undertaken.

OPTION 1: Secure Sarajevo Airport - forcibly secure and maintain a DMZ around Sarajevo. Create a demilitarized zone (8-10km) around Sarajevo airfield which denies the Bosnian Serbs from employing weapons against aircraft that are in flight or on the ground. This option could require up to a division sized force to secure the airfield and remove the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Muslim presence from the immediate area.

UNPROFOR Action:

- UNPROFOR seize (if necessary) and establish administrative control over the Sarajevo airport
- Secure airfield perimeter and approaches using a combination of troops equipped with means of acquisition for various types of attack. May include night vision devices, GPS, artillery acquisition battery.
- Take direct action to secure high terrain and buildings from belligerents. Move civilians outside of airport/ safe zone (2-3km). Combatants excluded inside 8-10km zone.

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- Roving security patrols along approaches to the airport. Requires mounted and dismounted patrols monitoring out to 10 km from the airport.
- NATO Airborne AC-130 and helicopter response capability to attack sniper/mortar/artillery positions. Consider use of a ground quick reaction force.

Belligerent Reaction:

- "Administrative" harassment by Serbian officials at the airport.
 - Threats from Bosnian Serb government in Pale, e.g., refusing to guarantee the safety of UN flights.
 - Employ random sniping incidents due to the particular vulnerability of aircraft
 - Small arms fire directed either at aircraft or ground personnel. Will be disruptive even if not directed at airport operations per se.
 - Random or continuous mortar and artillery attacks designed to damage the airfield, aircraft or simply to disrupt operations.
 - Employment of man portable IR surface to air missiles/AAA designed to directly attack aircraft.
 - Employment of longer range systems (heavy artillery, SA-2s from ranges of 30-50kms).
 - Horizontal escalation elsewhere in B-H; hostage taking, attacks on ground convoys, attacks on UN personnel, disruption of utilities into Sarajevo and other enclaves.
- ~~BSA may target UNPROFOR, attempting to blame the RSF in order to encourage a NATO response against the BSA.~~

Counteraction:

- Difficult if not impossible to counteract Bosnian Serb horizontal escalation/asymmetric responses.

Recommended Force Enhancements:

- Counterbattery radar, NODs, GPS, and other long range acquisition devices linked to means of reaction.
- Up to a brigade dedicated to airport security with heavy quick reaction force, up to a brigade sized force to remove combatants from the Sarajevo airport area.
- AC-130, CAS, and helicopter support
- Air assault capability (company sized)

Pol-Mil Considerations:

- UNPROFOR/Allies unlikely to support "offensive" operation to open airport.
- Additional troop contributions to support new mission unlikely.
- Allies could call for large US troop and equipment contribution.
- Bosnian Serbs could advertise DMZ as form of ethnic cleansing.

Risk Assessment:

- Irrespective of any of the military measures taken, the absolute safety of transport/civilian aircraft cannot be guaranteed given the threat environment.
- Difficulty maintaining sophisticated equipment with limited logistics base.
- Cannot guarantee the survivability of aircraft (especially helicopters, transport, and AC-130s) in a semi-integrated air defense network.
- UNPROFOR would be required to redeploy forces to support this option which could create increased risk in other areas. Only French, UK, Dutch, Canadian forces capable of accomplishing tasks associated with this option.
- Without significant force enhancements, UNPROFOR forces outmatched by Bosnian Serb forces.
- Increased probability of UNPROFOR ground force casualties.
- Airport sits astride confrontation line; will be difficult to establish which party is responsible for firing.

OPTION 2: Use CAS and air strike packages to support delivery of humanitarian aid flights. Marshall significant NATO air package to suppress immediate threats around Sarajevo airport as aid is flown into and unloaded at the airfield. Package could include integration of target acquisition systems to assist in locating indirect firing systems. Given the nature of the threat surrounding the airfield, target acquisition (rifleman, AA gun, mortar) would be extremely difficult. As a consequence, the ability to deliver effective suppressive fire against these type targets would be extremely difficult.

UNPROFOR Action:

- Deploy target acquisition system to Sarajevo airfield. Deploy TACPs to Sarajevo area.
- Package aid deliveries so that CAS/air strike packages support specified high density delivery periods.
- Clearly state intent to use NATO air support for protecting aid deliveries into Sarajevo.
- Specify target categories (high value, artillery pieces, headquarters in Sarajevo vicinity) that NATO may strike in response to Serb attack on humanitarian aid flights.

Belligerent Reaction:

- Continued "administrative" harassment by Serbian officials at the airport. Blocking aid outside airport.
- Threats from Bosnian Serb government refusing safety of flights.
- Hostage taking - placing hostages at weapons sites.
- Direct attack against humanitarian flights.
- BiH may manipulate NATO's intent to use air power to their advantage.

Counteraction:

- Direct attack against targets engaging aircraft.
- Direct attack against Bosnian Serb high value targets.

Recommended Force Enhancements:

- AC-130 aircraft.
- EW CAP (EA-6B, EF-111s).

Pol-Mil Considerations:

- Troop contributing nations unlikely to support air option ~~due to concern for safety of deployed troops.~~
- "Dual key" arrangement remains key factor in control of air strikes.
- Could require significant US contribution in terms of air assets.
- Bosnian Serbs likely to use collateral damage as media weapon against US/NATO. Given this scenario, attempts to suppress sniper/mortar fires in an urban environment have a high potential for collateral damage.

Risk Assessment:

- Air power alone insufficient to protect humanitarian aid flights and keep airfield open. Threat/target difficult to identify and acquire (snipers, mortars, urban environment, mountainous topography).
- Support aircraft (AC-130) at high risk in semi-integrated air defense network.
- Bosnian Serbs can react in ways (hostage taking, utility shut-down) which limit the effectiveness of air power options.
- High probability of collateral damage and fratricide.

OPTION 3: Open and maintain a road corridor from the Adriatic coast to Sarajevo (15km through Bosnian Serb held territory).

UNPROFOR Action:

- Enhance convoy ability to protect themselves by employing a graduated range of security responses from self protection through heavy force (armor/Infantry Fighting Vehicle) security escorts.
- UNPROFOR can create and employ a "Quick Reaction Force" consisting of heavy ground maneuver units, assault forces, and possibly helicopters.
- To counter interdiction efforts UNPROFOR can obtain and employ combat engineer units/assets moving with convoys or reacting to specific points.
- Provide each convoy with TACPs and continuous overhead air escort (helo/fixed wing).

Belligerent Reaction:

- Incidents of civil disobedience on the part of the population, e.g. crowds blocking roads.
- Halt and delay convoys with intent to delay aid delivery or steal ("tax") contents of the convoys.
- Sniping or other acts of random violence to intimidate and disrupt or stop convoys.
- Attacks on convoys to prevent delivery of aid or as a punitive measure in response to UNPROFOR (or opposing) belligerent actions.
- Belligerents may stop/delay aid by interdicting LOC.

Barricade roadway	Mine road segments
Destroy bridges	Block tunnels

Counteraction:

- Difficult to counteract Bosnian Serb indirect responses - mining roads, destroying bridges (72 choke points on the Ploce - Sarajevo route).

Recommended Force Enhancements.

- Up to a brigade for route security (approx 15 km).
- Quick Reaction Force (mech and air assault).
- 1-2 engineer battalions.
- AC-130, CAS, and helicopter support.
- MP units.

Pol-Mil Considerations:

- Additional troop contributions to support new mission unlikely.
- UNPROFOR/NATO allies could call for significant US contribution.
- UNPROFOR unlikely to accept full enforcement of mandate.

Risk Assessment:

- Bosnian Serb indirect/asymmetrical responses can halt aid delivery.
- Current UNPROFOR forces not capable of providing robust ground escort package. Without enhancements, UNPROFOR forces would be outmatched by Bosnian Serb forces.
- Difficulty maintaining sophisticated equipment with limited logistics base.
- Cannot guarantee the survivability of aircraft (especially helicopters, AC-130s) in a semi-integrated air defense network.
- Increased probability of UNPROFOR ground force casualties.
- Routes parallel numerous hot spots near the active confrontation line. Convoys may encounter indirect fire and disrupt or stop convoys.

NOTE: These options were developed based on the assigned mission - reopen Sarajevo airport. The options are intentionally robust based on the threat capabilities and areas required to be secured. An air strike only package directed against high value targets throughout Bosnia was not considered. This approach could be perceived as purely offensive and unrelated to the

direct opening of the airport at Sarajevo. The danger to relief operations and UNPROFOR troops could rise dramatically given this approach to reopening Sarajevo.

5. ~~(S)~~ Recommendation. The military options are high risk, high cost operations. Unless the US is willing to employ ground forces to support the securing of Sarajevo airfield and/or the coastal route to Sarajevo, it is unlikely that UNPROFOR or NATO will support a military option. At this time, the Joint Staff recommends against executing a military option.

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Based on the threat capabilities and areas required to be